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141500Z Dec 04

UNCLAS ANKARA 006940

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NO PROGRESS ON TURKISH TRUCKERS' STRIKE

REF: ANKARA 6810

Sensitive But Unclassified.

1. (SBU) Summary: The wild cat strike by Turkish truck drivers that began on December 7 continues to halt nearly all fuel deliveries to Iraq -- the only exception being JP-8 coalition sustainment fuel and three trucks of gasoline. The largest Turkish contractor, Petrol Ofisi, said the five companies working for SOMO are having trouble communicating with SOMO officials. However, Petrol Ofisi, which is also a contractor for DESC, said it will begin negotiations without prior approval from SOMO. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Petrol Ofisi (PO) is the largest of five contractors providing fuel for SOMO; it is DESC's sole Turkish contractor. PO Transportation Manager Dogan Mutluay told Econoff that PO hosted a meeting of the five Turkish companies on Monday to coordinate a joint bargaining position. However, because the Turkish companies have not been able to communicate directly with SOMO officials in Baghdad, they did not feel that they could proceed with talks. Mutluay said that PO will consult today with DESC on a bargaining position, and will use that as a basis to negotiate with the truckers without receiving prior approval from SOMO. Mutluay said PO followed the same course in the 2003 strike. However, the other companies want to wait until they receive approval to negotiate from SOMO, which Mutulay feared could take another week.

3. (SBU) Mutluay said that PO continues to load trucks with JP-8 without interference from truckers. He said that company officials convinced the strike leaders that the delivery was for military purposes and should not be included in the strike. He added that PO had managed to load 33 trucks of gasoline for U.S. troops in Iraq; however, strike leaders managed to stop 30 of the 33 at the Turkey-Iraq border. (We will try to confirm this information.)

4. (U) Baghdad Minimize Considered.
EDELMAN